

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S REMARKS AT THE UNVEILING OF THE HEAD OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, AUGUST 30, 1936

Gutzon Borglum (Sculptor) introduction:

"I want you, Mr. President, to dedicate this memorial as a Shrine to Democracy; to call upon the people of the earth for one hundred thousand years to come to read the thought and to see what manner of men struggled here to establish self-determined government in the western world. With the prayer that it shall not perish from the earth."

President Roosevelt spoke as follows:

"I think, my friends, that there are two people who told me about this in the early days - one of them was Mr. Borglum and the other was Senator Norbeck.

"On many occasions, when a new project is presented to you on paper and then, later on, you see the accomplishment, you are disappointed: but it is just the opposite of that in what we are looking at now. I had seen the photographs: I had seen the drawings and I had talked with those who are responsible for this great work, and yet I had had no conception until about ten minutes ago not only of its magnitude but of its permanent beauty and of its permanent importance.

"Mr. Borglum has well said that this can be a monument and an inspiration for the continuance of the democratic-republican form of government, not only in our own beloved country, but, we hope, throughout the world.

"This is the second dedication. There will be others by other presidents in other years. When we get through, there will be something for the American people that will last through not just generations but for thousands and thousands of years, and I think that we can perhaps meditate a little on those Americans ten thousand years from now when the weathering on the face of Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln shall have proceeded to perhaps a depth of a tenth of an inch - meditate and wonder what our descendants, and I think they will still be here, will think about us. Let us hope that at least they will give us the benefit of the doubt - that they will believe we have honestly striven every day and generation to preserve for our descendants a decent land to live in and a decent form of government to operate under.

"I am very glad to have come here today informally. It is right and proper that I should have come informally because we do not want formalities where nature is concerned.

"What we have done so far exemplifies what I have been talking about in the last few days - cooperation with nature and not fighting with nature.

"I am happy to congratulate all of you not only on what we see today but on what is going to happen in the future at Mount Rushmore."